

**PLATYPALPUS BIAPICALIS WEBER (DIPTERA, HYBOTIDAE)  
NEW TO BRITAIN**

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Among numerous specimens of the common *Platypalpus pallidiventris* (Meig.) and *P. longiseta* (Zett.) collected during a survey for the Nature Conservancy Council was a single female of the very similar *P. biapicalis*. Weber (1972) described this species from Hungary, and Kovalev & Chvala (1985) have since recorded it from several localities in Czechoslovakia.

*Platypalpus biapicalis* belongs to the *pallidiventris*-*cursitans* groups (Collin's (1961) group 8, Chvala's (1975) group IX). It shares with *P. pallidiventris* and *P. longiseta* the unique combination of three notopleural setae and black dorsal setae on the anterior and posterior tibiae. The males are easily separable using genitalia characteristics which are illustrated by Collin (1961) and Weber (1972). The specific epithet *biapicalis* presumably refers to the two broad, shallow excisions on the distal margin of the left lamella. The anal papillae of *biapicalis* are both broadly rounded lamellae lacking the pronounced asymmetry found in those of *pallidiventris* and *longiseta*. The front tarsi of male *biapicalis* are indistinctly annulate.

Dry pinned females of the trio are less easily separated. In my experience, a reliable but indistinct character used by Collin (1961) to separate the two well known species is the colour of the third antennal segment. In *pallidiventris* it is entirely black whereas in *longiseta* it has a yellowish base. Identifications based on this character have been confirmed by examining differences in the genitalia. The antenna of *P. biapicalis* may have either colour pattern though in my specimen it is entirely black. However, female *biapicalis* may be separated from the other species by the conspicuous hairs towards the lateral margin of the abdomen. These are almost as long as the tergites and on the postero-lateral margin of the eighth tergite they form a pronounced fan-like cluster. The equivalent hairs in the other species are inconspicuous. Also, the seventh tergite is shiny with two broad dust bars that do not meet medially; in the other species, this tergite is entirely dull.

Conspicuous differences between the females of all these species are visible in the last two abdominal segments of specimens that are preserved in alcohol or in slide mounts of these segments. The features are also discernable in dry specimens in which these segments have been extended while still fresh, though some care is needed in interpreting the differences between *P. pallidiventris* and *P. longiseta* because dry dusting obscures the distinction between sclerites and membranes. The differences are summarized below and are figured.

	<i>biapicalis</i>	<i>pallidiventris</i>	<i>longiseta</i>
Tergite VII	completely sclerotized	partially membranous	medially membranous
Tergite VIII	mostly membranous dorsally	entirely sclerotized	entirely sclerotized
Sternite VII	quadrangular	elongate	elongate

Kovalev & Chvala (1985) describe *P. biapicalis* as a lowland species with some captures from poplar and willow foliage along a large river and from bushes by a forest margin. My specimen was swept at Aunt Mary's Bottom, near Rampisham in Dorset (NGR ST546023) on 10 July 1987. The habitat was seepage fen with a slight calcareous influence near wet woodland and sallow carr. The dominant plants were

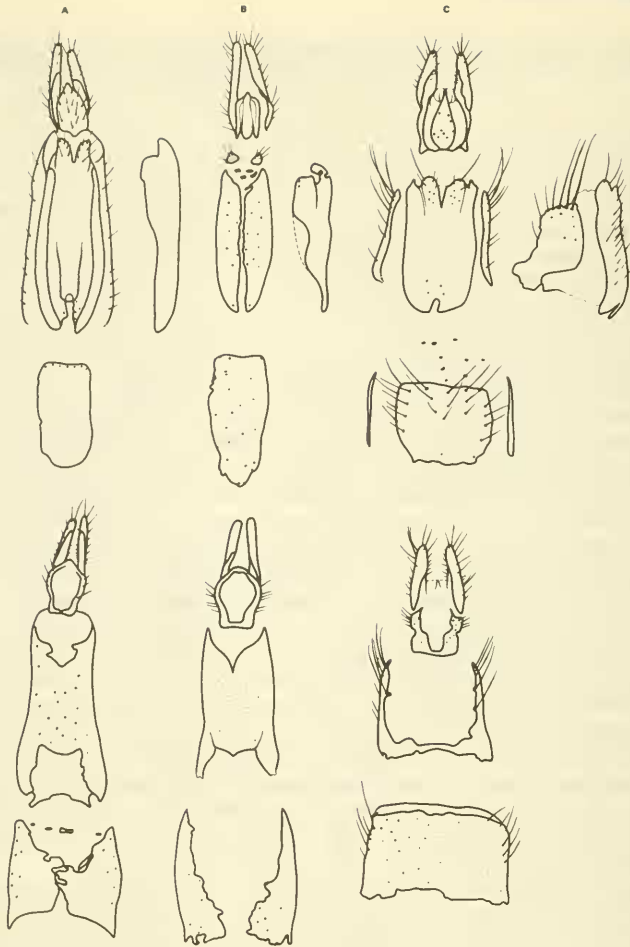


Fig. 1. Terminal abdominal segments of *Platypalpus* females. Sternites 7-9 and segment 8 in lateral view (above) and tergites 7-9 (below). (A) *P. pallidiventris*; (B) *P. longiseta*; (C) *P. biapicalis*.

*Carex* and *Juncus* spp forming tussocks interspersed with bare peat. Other frequent plants were *Equisetum* sp, *Angelica sylvestris* L., *Pulicaria dysenterica* (L.) and *Galium uliginosum* L. *Platypalpus fasciatus* (Meigen) was also recorded here.

#### REFERENCES

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